

Beaverhead and Big Hole Rules Review: Original Public Comments

What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: haven't fished the beaverhead much but im sure the regulations help with overcrowding there also

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: i would like them to keep regulations in force just as they are there also

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : IVE BEEN FISHING THE BIG HOLE RIVER FOR 45YRS AND CAN HONESTLY SAY THE RULES ON THE BIG HOLE HAVE BEEN A BLESSING. BEFORE THEY WERE IMPLEMENTED THE RIVER WAS TERRIBLY OVERCROWDED. IT HAS DONE EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS INTENDED TO DO WHEN RULES WERE IMPLEMENTED A LOT OF THE PROBLEM WAS LOCAL ANGLERS AND OUT FITTERS AS WELL WERE COMPLAING THE PLEASANT EXPERIENCE WE ALL HAD BEFORE THE RIVER GOT SO OVER WHELMED WITH FISHERMAN THAT PEACE AND TRANQUILITY ON AN OUTING OF FISHING WAS LOST TO ALL RIVER USERS . BUT WITH THE REGULATIONS THAT CHANGED AND NOW ON CITIZENS DAY A PERSON CAN GO TO ONE OF THOSE STRETCHES OF RIVER AND ENJOY THEMSELVES .THATS EXACTLY WHY THE REGULATIONS WERE PUT INTO FORCE . I THINK YOU WILL SEE THE MAJORITY OF RIVER USERS ARE EXTEREMLY PLEASED WITH HOW WELL THE REGULATIONS ALIVEATED THE OVER CROWIDNESS . IN SUMMARY PERSONNALLY THE REGULATIONS ARE THE BEST THING EVER HAPPENED TO THE BIG HOLE RIVER AND ALL INVOLVED MY VOTE IS TO KEEP ALL REGULATIONS IN FORCE ESPECIALLY CITIZENS DAY.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: PLEASE KEEP THE CITIZENS DAYS EXACTLY THE WAY THEY ARE RIGHT NOW AS WELL AS THE OTHER ROTATIONS THEY MADE AD Y FISHING ENJOYABLE FOR ALL CONCERNED A 100% TURNAROUND BEFORE THE REGULATIONS WERE IMPLEMENTED AS THE OLD SAYING GOES IF IT I'SINT BROKE DON"T FIX IT

Do you have any additional comments?: THE MONTANA FISH WWILD LIFE AND PARKS DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB IMPLEMENTING THE REGULATIONS LAST TIME AND I'M SURE THEY SEE FIT TO DO ANOTHER EXCELLENT JOB THIS TIME THANK YOU SINCERELY



I am sure a lot of thought has gone into changing the floating regulations on the Big Hole River. I can appreciate the ideas of eliminating the “rest” day on various stretches. I am in favor in protecting this valuable resource and preserving it for future generations.

The most disappointing part of the “rest” day rule is it limits former residents from enjoying the resource. These individuals have had to relocate to provide for their families. When they return they are limited on where they can fish or enjoy this resource w/ their families. Their impact on the river is very minimal compared to former & current Guides & Outfitters who are on their soapbox to save the river. Their greed is still apparent today as they want the afore mentioned from enjoying the Big Hole and passing traditions on to their families.

With this said, I am in favor of keeping the current rules and opening these stretches to non-residents, former residents, to bank and float fishing on their own accord and not under the tutorage of an outfitter.



Please leave the recreation rules as they are. Working just fine.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: See my comments on the Big Hole they are the same for the Beverhead.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: See my comments on the Big Hole they are the same for the Beaverhead.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I have fished the Big Hole for 60 plus years both from boats and the bank. About 15 years ago because of conflicts and congestion mostly caused by outfitters and nonresident floaters I quit float fishing The access sights were beginning to look like Wal-Mart's parking lot and the river resembled Interstate 90 through Salt Lake. As a bank fisherman

as the years progressed I found again I was getting into many conflicts and floating congestion was increasing, most all caused by the same group. Check the license plates at the access sights. Several years ago I decided to confine my fishing to the off months to avoid the boats and conflicts. Now I see this same group expanding there opportunities into the off season also. Next choice for me is to quit fishing. Now you know how myself and many others have been affected, and the rules have done little to check this uncontrolled madness. Thanks for nothing! A displaced fisherman!

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Stop the expansion of outfitting. Limit the amount of non resident boats on the river at one time. Control illegal outfitting better, especialy launches from non state controlled access sights. Do not change the resident days only sections of the river. Limit all commercial use of the river to the opening and closing of the General Fishing Season. Floating and drinking should be controled the same as drinking and driving. Increase the fee's for commercial use of the river. Those fee's should be treated no differently than those of miners, loggers, campers and such.

Do you have any additional comments?:



Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I grew up in Butte and reguarly fished the Big Hole river for many years. I saw first hand the increased use of the river by fishing guides and non-residents. I am not totally opposed to guides and non-residents using Montana's rivers, but I do strongly believe that their use of the rivers should be limited. Montana residents should be able to enjoy recreating on our rivers and land without feeling overcrowded or "pushed out" by guides and non-residents. It's a sad fact that hunting and fishing in Montanta is becoming more of a money making proposition than a recreation. Please do not make the situation even worse by allowing more guides on the Big Hole river that there currently are.

Do you have any additional comments?:



Hi Charlie, I understand the FWP Commission will be reviewing the Beaverhead and Big Hole River Rec Rules. I have lived in and worked in the Wise River area for over 30 years now. In the 1980's and early 1990's I fished the Big Hole and to some extent the Beaverhead Rivers quit a bit but as time went on it started to get pretty crowded on both rivers and I in turn started looking to other waters to get away from the crowds. After the Rec Rules went into effect I started fishing the rivers again. I use the rules to determine which sections of the river to float and fish in order to get away from the crowds. **The Rules are working and should not be changed.** I think most folks know them and they should be left as is.

When I have out of state family and friends visiting, we fish sections of the rivers that are open to floating for non-residents and it hasn't been a problem. The rivers are long enough to be able to choose good sections to fish and closed sections to non-resident float fishing hasn't affected our fishing and enjoyment of the rivers.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: These rules have been a very good thing, and need to stay in place the way they are now. It is A good thing (as a resident) to have a couple days a week to float with out fighting with guides.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Better enforcing current rules. Not all guides follow these rules.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The current rules have been a wonderful thing, we usually plan our floats around the section that is closed that day. Me and my family spend aproxomaty 30 days anually on the Big Hole River and without these rules there would be alot

more guide/floater conflicts. These guides seem to work hard on the bad reputation they are earning.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Leave them in place, and enforce them more. We see river guides in closed sections all the time.

Do you have any additional comments?: FWP would be wise to stop catering to guides/outfitters and focus on the real core of thier customer base (the resident hunters/fishermen). If possitive experiences are not available for our young outdoors people, you will certainly find yourselves with fewer of them in future years. This problem is alot harder to fix ounce it happens than it is to correct before does happen.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: yes

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: leave them as they are.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : yes

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: leave them as they are.

Do you have any additional comments?: The system appears to work.....leave it alone.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: They are working just fine the way they are. Don't cave into the \$\$\$\$ aspect of recreation. Outfitters do just fine as it is. They can always wade fish as I do! I get tired of boaters coming through areas where I am fishing when there is plenty of river they can use!

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Keep a working plan the same as it is!

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Same as the Beaverhead comment! Leave the rules in place!

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: That the rules are working! Think of the MT people before the almighty \$\$\$\$!

Do you have any additional comments?:



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: N/A

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: N/A

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : My family has owned property at the Rainbow Ranch subdivision, Sub 02S/Blk 09W/Lots 11, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18 for the past 30 years. Over the last 20 years we have seen an increased pressure on the Big Hole River from Divide to Melrose increasing every year. Along with the increase in anglers, we have also seen a tremendous increase in littering along the river banks of the Big Hole River between Divide and Melrose and complete disregard for this blue ribbon fisherie. My family has always obeyed the fishing limits imposed on this stretch of river, but have noticed that the fishing success has continued to decline over the years. There are so many boats that float this stretch of river in the summer months that an angler could darn near walk

across the river and never get wet. We appreciate what the FWP is trying to do, but it appears that the FWP does not have enough manpower to police the policies that they have put in place.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I would like to see the FWP commission to consider implementing several measures. 1) I would like to see the FWP commission implement a \$5.00 usage fee for the anglers who float to park their vehicles. If they use 2 vehicles, one for drop off and one for pick up, that would be a \$10.00 fee for the day. The money raised from these anglers could be used to help clean up the fisherie from those few bad apples that feel as though littering is not a "big deal". The parking fee could also be used to maintain the pick up and drop off points or even improve those areas. 2) Since many sections of the river have limits and catching and releasing fish is strongly recommended, I would like to see the FWP commission implement "barbless hooks" for the entire Big Hole River so it is easier for anglers to release fish. 3) Empower the people to police the river and turn in offenders. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on this extremely important issue.

Do you have any additional comments?: I would like to see that the outfitters have further restrictions put on them to limit the amount of traffic that puts such incredible pressure on this blue ribbon trout fisherie.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: Yes

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Not whole lot. Citizen's Day is mostly ingnored by the citizens and they tend to be in with the guides regardless of the stretch closed to guiding. Citizen's Day after June seems to be a waste of the resource and causes much more crowding.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Big Hole: FWP surveys indicate this is not a crowded river and usually 60-70% of the use is due to residents of Montana. Leave the rules alone.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Cost me business.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big

Hole River?: That the overwhelming majority of use is non-commercial.

Do you have any additional comments?:



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Although I do not use the Beaverhead River with the frequency that I use the Big Hole River, I believe that the current river recreational rules are very positive for the continued health of the river. The current rules allow fair access for both recreationalists and outfitters. I fear that altering the current rules will adversely affect both the river and the ability of local families to access the river. In the long run, guides and outfitters would be adversely affected due to over use.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: I believe that guides and outfitters are good and hard-working Montanans earning a living, and most of them wisely use the resource. I fear that by altering the current rules, residents will be adversely affected by the increased pressure placed on the river by additional guide/outfitter floats. I ask the commission to maintain the current river recreational rules. The current rules are in the best interest of the river and all using it.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : My family and I frequently use the Big Hole River and surrounding area for floating, fishing, camping, and hunting. The river is truly a gem and should be guarded as such. I believe that the current rules affect me personally by allowing my family and friends - residents of the area - quality time to enjoy the river with reduced commercial usage. This is important to all of us. The current rules also allow my neighbors who are guides and outfitters the use of a river that is not endangered by over-commercialization. In short, the current rules benefit all - especially the Big Hole River!

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I hope that the commission will consider the past decade of success under the current recreation rules. Guides and outfitters have been given the opportunity to make a living using the best river in the country. Over commercialization has not damaged the river. Residents have been provided

with time to enjoy the river. All involved have benefited from the current rules. I urge the commission to continue the current rules.

Do you have any additional comments?: The FWP Commission is committed to the fair and balanced use of the Big Hole and Beaverhead Rivers. I am sure of that. I hope that my grandchildren get to recreate on both and enjoy the experience. The biggest threat to both rivers is over commercialization. The current rules protect the rivers and allow for fair access for all. Please continue the current recreational rules on both rivers.



Please leave it as is. It is refreshing to go to the closed stretches on those days and not see 50 outfitted people with all the bells and whistles. By living and working in this area the residents should be rewarded a day of peaceful and pressureless fishing.

I fished both rivers for the first time last year. It was my first experience with fly fishing and was an excellent trip. We caught quality fish that are a result of the regulations in place. I am of the opinion that the rest/rotation rules are good for the rivers and deregulation of these waters could potentially harm the fishery. Usage days are also good for the rivers as they limit the number of boats on the water which allows the fish to rest and receive less pressure than if it wasn't regulated. Thanks in advance for your consideration in this matter.



I AM A MONTANA PROPERTY OWNER AND TAX PAYER AND A NON RESIDENT LICENSE HOLDER. I SPEND A TOTAL ABOUT THREE MONTHS EACH YEAR ON MY MONTANA PROPERTY AND AM A REGULAR AND FREQUENT FISHERMAN ON THE BEAVERHEAD AND BIG HOLE RIVERS. I STRONGLY SUPPORT THE EXISTING RULES AND REGULATIONS AS THEY PERTAIN TO OUTFITTER USAGE DAYS AND OVERALL ACCESS MANAGEMENT FOR THESE STREAMS. THE BEAVERHEAD AND BIG HOLE RIVERS ARE NATIONAL TREASURES AND THE FISHERIES HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR STRENGTH AND VITALITY LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE USE RESTRICTIONS AND OTHER PROTECTIVE PROVISIONS EMBODIED IN THE EXISTING REGULATIONS. OVER THE PAST THIRTY YEARS I HAVE FISHED MOST OF THE BLUE RIBBON TROUT STREAMS IN THE WESTERN U.S. AND IN MY VIEW THE MONTANA FW&P REGULATIONS FOR THE BEAVERHEAD AND BIG HOLE ARE SUPERIOR TO ANY COMPARABLE STREAM MANAGEMENT

REGULATIONS THAT I HAVE OBSERVED AND I BELIEVE THAT THE QUALITY OF THE FISHING ON THESE STREAMS SUPPORTS THAT CONCLUSION. I COMMEND MONTANA FW&P FOR PROMULGATING THE EXISTING REGULATIONS FOR THESE TWO RIVERS AND WISELY ENFORCING THE ACCESS LIMITING PROVISIONS. I URGE THE AGENCY ALLOW THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS TO REMAIN IN FORCE WITH NO CHANGE.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Yes, I have fished the Beaverhead River numerous times.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Leave the rules as they are. They have addressed the over-crowding issue and should remain in place.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Yes, I have fished the Big Hole River numerous times and I feel the rules have positively affected my experience.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Leave the rules as they are. They have addressed the over-crowding issue and should remain in place.

Do you have any additional comments?:



The Anaconda Sportsmen's Club submits the following comments on the review of recreation rules concerning use of the Beaverhead and Big Hole rivers. Our club members regard the Big Hole as our home water and have long history of protecting the river and its watershed.

The existing rules were the result of long, difficult negotiations between all affected parties. They represent a compromise reached among the groups involved

Our members are in support of the rules as now written and do not feel that any changes are needed at this time. Our club was involved in the negotiations that led to the adoption of the current rules. We think that trying to change the rules will result in another extended argument that will benefit no one.

The Anaconda Sportsmen's Club believes that the saying "if it ain't broke; don't fix it" is the way to deal with these . Please leave the rules as they are at this time.

Thank you for the chance to comment on these rules.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: not at all

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I think the rules have given me a better floating experience and has allowed me to enjoy the river more.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I would like them to consider that this is why we live in Montana and that people who come and visit should not get the prime time to use the river. Before the rule were adopted the guides would swarm the river and it was not pleasurable for the locals. I appreciate the fact that tourism and guides help the economy but they have all week to use the river and do not need to take up the resource on the weekend when most natives are trying to use the resource,

Do you have any additional comments?:



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I have floated the Beaverhead and Big Hole Rivers for the past 34 years. The Beaverhead is very crowded with the guides, both from in-state and out-of-state, and their clients now as compared to earlier years. They hold the clients in the holes or drop them in the holes on the corners to fish from the water or banks. You cannot float around them as the river is narrow so you have to float in the holes to get by them, thus creating problems with them as they think you are bothering their fishing. Because of this the guides and their clients get hostile creating some very big problems. To avoid this many of the locals only float on the days when the guides are not allowed on the river. If you remove these dates then you will create a very hostile environment between the guides and locals.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Please leave the rules for the locals in place. Additionally, you should look at the number of guides hitting this river. I thought that the rules limited the number of guides using this river to the historical use.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : This is even worse. Saturdays and Sundays are great days on the river. There are a lot of people locally who don't float to fish, but just want a day on the river. They don't even recognize that there are specific rules set up to provide them days free of guides. To remove the local day would cause problems between these parties. I have a cabin in Divide and have noticed the huge increase in animosity between the guides and the locals. The local guides are great and recognize that we are all in the same boat, so to speak, when using the Big Hole. However, the out-of-state guides and guides who are there for only short spells conflict with the locals on a regular basis. The crowding of the river on the sections that they are allowed on is noticeable. Again, they hold their clients in the holes, limiting the fishing of others in those holes and stretches of river. We try to float the sections on which they are not allowed to limit crowding and problems.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Please leave the rules for the locals in place. They actually work. Additionally, you should look at the number of guides hitting this river. I thought that the rules limited the number of guides using this river to the historical use.

Do you have any additional comments?: Thank you for allowing me to comment. With the present rules both rivers offer everyone a wonderful experience. They should be enforced and allowed to remain in place.



On behalf of our 23 affiliated sportsmen's clubs and more than 7500 members, Montana Wildlife Federation wishes to comment on the review of Recreation rules concerning use of the Beaverhead and Big Hole rivers.

The existing rules were the result of long, difficult negotiations between all affected parties. They represent a compromise reached consensually.

Our members and affiliates are generally in agreement that the existing rules are functioning quite well and that no changes are warranted at this time. It is our opinion that efforts to amend the rules will reopen old wounds and condemn all factions to another round of contentious negotiations.

It is our feeling that the axiom, "If it ain't broke; don't fix it" is an absolutely appropriate guide in this issue. Please leave the rules as they are at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these rules.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: WA

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I have fished the BigHole since I was 15 yrs old. Born in Montana, Educated in Montana, own a home in Montana. I float with a guide on the Big hole 3-5 times a year(primarily during June). The rules are super. There is plenty of room for the guides and people like me. There it is great to leave other pieces of water open to local folks and wade fishermen. I am also a businessman and understand the guides needs. But you must protect the river first. Without it there are not guides, fishermen, or issues.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: That the rules have been quite effective. From a "dudes" perspective I have been able to enjoy the river. The guides just need to understand that these are special rivers. they can book trips, but they just have to follow the rules.

Do you have any additional comments?: Do not change the existing rules.



The reason why the Beaverhead and Big Hole River rules were adopted was crowding and conflicts on the rivers. The River Rules have reduced crowding and greatly reduced conflict. Prior to the rules I often had anxiety about going fishing on the Beaverhead or Big Hole, conflicts were inevitable. Many anglers quit fishing these rivers because of the crowding and conflicts. After the rules were implemented the crowding is reduced and the conflicts are minimal. On residents day there is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. On sections of the rivers closed to float outfitting, but open to the public, the same friendly, welcoming atmosphere exists. I visit with many non residents on these sections of the rivers and they like it. I have fished on almost every Saturday residents day on the Beaverhead River, only missing it when the caddis or salmonfly hatch is on the Big Hole. I can attest that they are being used. Exceptions are caused by silty and muddy water conditions, such as on the Beaverhead like this year when Clark Canyon blew out, or very high water conditions on the Big Hole. **The Big Hole and Beaverhead River Plans are working well and are a model for other rivers with competing public and commercial use.** These plans we brought about because of crowding, conflict and unregulated commercial use. Now, there isn't the crowding and conflict that occurred prior to the plans. There is a move to do anything, just to get the rule making process open again,so the opponents of the river rules

can dismantle as much of the rules as they can. **The Big Hole and Beaverhead River Rules are working, please don't Change them. Don't fix it if it isn't broke.**



I think the existing rules with rotating closures for float outfitters and out of state fisherman on the Big Hole and Beaverhead are working fine!!



I float the Big Hole and Beaverhead rivers pretty regular and think that the current plan for those rivers works extremely well. I would leave well enough alone.



Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Recreation Management Rules for the Beaverhead and Big Hole Rivers. I have been fishing both rivers for more than thirty years. For the last 20 years I have lived in the Big Hole. During that time I also worked as a licensed fishing guide for 5 years. I am on the Big Hole, in particular, several days a week. It has been my experience that the recreation rules have been very effective in reducing crowding and conflicts between public and commercial floating. I strongly support leaving the rules as they are currently written. Those that have questioned the rules are outfitters representing outfitter interest and not of the sportsmen of Southwest Montana.

I am writing to express my support of the current Big Hole and Beaverhead River regulations. These regulations were designed to limit floating and fishing density to maintain a healthy river ecosystem and provide local and other Montana residents with a quality experience on these two rivers. I am a frequent casual floater and occasional fisherman on these rivers and appreciate the limitations the current regulations put on out of state and commercial outfitters. It seems to me to be a moderate and reasonable approach to river protection.



I encourage you to maintain the current regulations, unless additional restrictions are necessary to protect these rivers , for instance in times of low water.

Thanks you very much for considering this matter and my suggestions. I hope you will continue to let science and river health determine policy.



I am a Montana resident and have spent many hours floating numerous sections of the Bib Hole river in my kayak. It is a special gift to Montana, and it has to be protected from overuse. The rules that are in place are a result of the cooperation of many interest groups. They are working as they are and should remain. Loosening any restrictions would be a step backward. Please document and include my opinion in your discussions. Please feel free to contact me if you like.



I am writing to express my support of the current Big Hole and Beaverhead River regulations. These regulations were designed to limit floating and fishing density to protect the health of the river ecosystem and to give local and other montanans a quality experience on these two rivers. I am a frequent casual floater and occasional fisherman on these rivers and I appreciate these regulation's attempt to limit out of state and commercial outfitters river access to prevent over-exposure and river degradation.

I believe they have been effective and I recommend that you keep them in place, unless additional restrictions are necessary , for instance in times of low water.

I hope you will continue to let science and river health be the determiners of river and wildlife policy.

Thank you for considering this matter and my suggestions.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: The rules provide a section where I can find privacy and solitude and not be run over by guides and boats.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Pleaseeeeeeeee maintain the rules as is!

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The rules provide a section where I can find privacy and solitude and not be run over by guides and boats.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Please maintain the rules as is!

Do you have any additional comments?:



The rules work great to preserve a great river and a great fishing experience . Please do not allow them to be altered in any way.



I am writing to express my opinion regarding the proposed rule changes on the Beaverhead and Big Hole Rivers.



I am satisfied with the current management of both rivers. I think that reserving specific days and times for resident floaters on the rivers is working fine. I see no need to open the rivers to non-resident and outfitter floaters in the sections reserved for residents. After all, only small sections of both rivers are affected. This provides a place for residents to go and not be overwhelmed with non-residents and paid outfitter's rafts and dorys.



Thank you for this rule as it has provided us with many days of river use in the past. I strongly urge that the rules not be changed so we can have many more days of use in the future for residents.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: N/A

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: N/A

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I know there is less outfitter / guide traffic on the Big HOLE River on the weekends in the areas set aside for citizens days. I am grateful outfitters and guides are restricted in these areas as I am not only concerned about heavy river traffic but also the effect river traffic has on the health of the fishery. If the fishery is going to last, it needs to be conserved and citizens day is just one way of ensuring that.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Please keep the citizens days in place.

Do you have any additional comments?:



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Mt.

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: These rules have made fishing on the beaverhead river MUCH more enjoyable. They have done a service to the angler who wants a less congested more relaxed fishing experience.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: PLEASE! keep these rules as they are now.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I enjoy floating the resident day sections off the big hole river.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: PLEASE! keep these rules in place they have been doing what they were intended to do.

Do you have any additional comments?:



The rules for managing the Big Hole River are working just fine. When FWP does its five year review please put me down for a positive vote for the status quo! There is no need to change what's working just for the sake of change. I understand the fishing has even improved since these rules have been implemented. Keep up the good work.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: They have made it more enjoyable by not being too crowded and being able to still catch fish.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Why fix what isn't broken!!

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : They have made it more enjoyable by not being too crowded and being able to still catch fish.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Why fix what isn't broken!!

Do you have any additional comments?: If you allow more outfitters/guides and non residents, you will eventually have to start cutting back the number of residents that use the rivers. The public is afraid that we will eventually have to apply to use the rivers much like the Smith River. We all know how hard it is to draw a permit for the Smith, it is nearly impossible. We were 1 out of 12 last year and 0 out of 9 this year. When will Montanans realize that we just keep giving away our resources. We gave in to the reintroduction of the wolves and now we are in a battle that can't be won with regards to our big game populations in constant decline. We are taking away our kids chance at enjoying the opportunity to be able to harvest some of our big game animals. We all know how hard it is to harvest an elk. Our kids won't be given the same opportunities we had. Example: no cow/spike elk. If we continue to give in to outside interests, pretty soon we will have nothing except for job loss(FWP) and poaching. Some example!!



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Mt

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: There is always one place on the river that I can go fishing and not have to compete with outfitters or non residents.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Consider that unlimited Outfitting will nearly ruin any fishing experiences that we as local residents might be able to have.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Same as on the Beaverhead.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Same

Do you have any additional comments?: Please do not change the rules, leave a stretch of water for us "locals" to fish so we do not have to compete with rude outfitters and nonresidents



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The rules that are currently in place are working fine and do not need to be changed. I have fished the Big Hole for 30 years and the current rules and regs in place have made for an enjoyable respite from the crowds and less than pleasant ventures I have had on the Madison and Missouri.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Please listen to the folks that live, work, fish and float the Big Hole. They have enjoyed the river and have been good stewards. The current rules and regs work - if it isn't broke, don't fix it!

Do you have any additional comments?: keep up the good work you all are doing. I do not favor the new rule changes but I also feel it doesn't hurt to periodically review the policies we have in place from time to time.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: the rules are fine just the. no need for change.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: more restriction for outfitters and guides.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : the rules have no affect on me personally.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: more restriction on outfitters and guides.

Do you have any additional comments?: reducing rules and regulation for outfitters and guides is very bad idea.this would open door wide open for even more outfitters and guides to invade our rivers.the river is hard enough to float and fish around the outfitters and guides as is.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: north carolina

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I think the rules are fine. It is perfectly reasonable to control fishing impacts and favoring the local population is fine. Outfitters also work well within these rules.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Protect our resource. This is an incredible resource that we must be good stewards

of to protect for future generations.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I think the rules are fine. It is perfectly reasonable to control fishing impacts and favoring the local population is fine. Outfitters also work well within these rules.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Waterflow is always an issue and any means to maintain flow for late in the season helps fishing and also helps the fish population.

Do you have any additional comments?: We need the High Road Bridge access put back in place. This will reduce pressures on other parts of the river by creating a new days float. Please push forward with the Hamilton Ranch folks to get this done. It would be very easy to do on the southeast side of the bridge. Thanks



to whom it may concern; i strongly oppose any effort to weaken the floating restrictions now in place on these two rivers. if any changes were to be made, they should be made even more stringent.



Dear FWP, Continuing with the current management plan, certainly is the best starting point. I have long advocated for reduced public pressure on the Big Hole. If quality of the fishing experience is the primary objective, then we need to proceed with further plans in the future. It is still unclear why the river is not closed down from Fall until the official opening in May. The current Whitefish season is a smokescreen for the taking of trout during the winter and spring. Many local people support a fall closure and reopen in May. This makes good common sense and should be reconsidered.



I am writing to give my comments and relay comments I have recieved from some of our customers. My wife and I own the Sportsman Motel and RV in Melrose. A good share of our customers are non-residents from all over the USA. Some of those customers complain and don't understand why they are unable to float on certain sections of the Big Hole River during their stay with us. I have heard comments from them such as, I have bought a non-resident licence, I pay Federal taxes that go to the National Forest and BLM lands that border the river and some Federal funding that goes to Montana FWP so why can't I float and fish? I do not know how to explain the reasoning for the non-resident rules as they are. Please explain how the FWP explains to our visitors from other states the reason for these restricions.

How were the restricions determined? Was there any data that supported restricting non- resident use? What data do you have now that would support continuing what I believe is unfair to non-residents.

Tourism is a large part of Montana's economy and a huge part of our personal income. I have fished in other US states and Canada and do not know of any that restrict part of their waters to residents only. I think we should consider that non-resident restictions tarnish Montana's reputation for friendly hospitallity with wide open spaces and pursue other solutions to supposed overcrowding.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: They have helped make the river less crowded and less stressful on days that the section is closed to guides. The Beaverhead is not a very wide river and some of these guides have boats anchored and fishermen in the middle of the river and are angry when you try to go around them. They think just because they are getting paid they own the river.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: I would like to see the rules stay the way they are but enforced more strictly and increase the fines for repeat offenders. I have seen guides without their tag on days when the section is closed to them.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : They have made the river less

crowded at the fishing accesses and less congestion on the river. Most the local guides obey the rules and are very friendly. There are some that are rude and seem upset because we are there. I like not having to deal with it.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Same comments I made on the Beaverhead.

Do you have any additional comments?: The Big Hole and the Beaverhead are becoming more crowded every year. These rules have made it possible for people to take their family on a float without dealing with guides. Please leave the rules the way they are and let Montanans enjoy their rivers.



Thanks for the opportunity to comment. As an out of state person who obtains a season license ~ 20 yrs. now. I think the rules are good as they stand.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Butte, MT. 59701

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: Yes

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I think that the rules on the Beaverhead River represent a fair solution to the social problems on the stream and have created a better overall recreational experience for angler.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: I think the will of the people of the State of Montana should rank high then and that with few exceptions it would be agreed that these rules have had a positive effect on the resource and the people who value it.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Initially, I had some concerns as a professional fly fishing guide who spent upwards of 70% of my guide days on the Big Hole River. These

concerns had mostly to do with the idea that by closing one section of the river we were increasing the fishing pressure in the other sections at certain peak usage periods during the season. However, I no longer have these concerns after seeing the policy in practice over many years. The resource has, I believe, been well served by these rules and the river experience remains as one of the best in the world. I have seen very little conflict on the Big Hole River since these rules have been instituted and give a great deal of credit for this to the fact that these rules are in place.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I would hope that they would consider the process that put these rules into effect to begin with so many years ago. To me and to my family this process represents a great victory for the resource, for the people of Montana, for the stakeholder, landowners, and outfitters. Some have had to make some sacrifices but none have been injured by these rules. These rules and the consensus process from which they sprang represent a great victory for conservationist, for our state, and for your agency. In Montana we value common sense and in this case common sense would require that we don't fix what is not broken.

Do you have any additional comments?: I attended the Open House at the War Bonnet Inn in Butte on March 2, 2010. There was some resistance to the choice of format at the beginning of the meet. However, the facilitator handled himself very professionally and the evening moved forward smoothly after it was agreed to allow those present to raise hands for those in favor of a continuation of the rules currently in place on the Beaverhead and Big Hole Rivers. I appreciate very much the fact that your agency's leadership and rank and file employees took the time away from their families to spend the evening with us to deal with this very important issue. As the father of two young female anglers I love to take my boat tags off on the weekends and watch them terrorize the trout on the Big Hole or just float down the stream in their PFDs. The fact that when we go on the Big Hole with my girls I almost always choose to float on the closed to guides/outfitter section should tell you that I appreciate the rules and your agency's efforts



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: Yes

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: very limited effect for me. I fish the beaverhead about 6 times a year.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Keep it the same as the past.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I fish the big hole all summer as much as i can. The present rules work well for me.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Keep the rules the same as the past.

Do you have any additional comments?: The Anaconda sportsmen club and Butte Skyline keep a close eye on both rivers and have good people to help FWP manage both rivers. There input is vital. Thanks for the ability to comment.



I would have liked to attend the meeting at the War Bonnet on March second but was unable to.

I would like to see the outfitter rules to remain in place on the big hole. On outfitter days it is so crowded on the river it is impossible to enjoy a day of fishing with my son. We go on resident days and enjoy it like I did with my father. If the rules are amended it will become an outfitter river and residents such as myself will not fish it anymore. If anything I believe the outfitter regulations should be made more stringent ie. less days, increased fees, number limits per day, increased fees...let the outfitters pass the costs to their clients. The river belongs to MONTANA sportsmen not rich out of staters.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Better quality of fishing. More of an oppertunity to be one with the river with out overcrouding.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the

Beaverhead River?: the rules are working. LEAVE THEM ALONE!!!

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I fish the river to have quiet time and personal space the citizen day give all of us that.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: If it is not broken don't fix it. Its not broken.

Do you have any additional comments?: Please listen to the people. Its not about money its about the river and the quality of the time we spend in the field. Thank You



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: They have made me plan my recreation and fishing there more carefully. I now go there when it is less likely to be crowded, or when fishing guides are not present.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Consider average Montana citizens, who, in large part are not guides and do not have the means to hire one. These river systems are one the reasons we live here and love this state. We have always been able to use and enjoy our public lands and should always be able to continue to do so.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The rules for the Big Hole apply to me the same exact way for the Beaverhead, see above.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Consider the same exact things for the Big Hole as for the Beaverhead River, See above.

Do you have any additional comments?: Please leave the rules as they are right now. Ordinary private Montana citizens must be able to have their own times to use these rivers. I understand that there are many different interests involved here, and that we must all compromise and sacrifice, to share these

rivers; but, Montana private citizens must have their own fair & equal access, as well as have their opinions heard. Thanks.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: I don't fish the Beaverhead much, but talking to people that do, it sounds like the rules are working well the way they are.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I have fished the Big Hole all my life (49yrs) and, until these rules were put in place, was literally driven off due to the over crowding. You could not find a hole or a good run that didn't have a guide and a boatload of clients already there.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: The quality of the experience of enjoying a day on the river for both residents and nonresidents.

Do you have any additional comments?: I would like to see the Big Hole closed from December 1st to the 3rd Saturday in May. The fish have enough pressure on them in spring, summer and fall.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?:

Do you have any additional comments?: I fish Rock Creek west of Phillipsburg and found that when outfitters are prohibited from fishing the Big Hole or Beaverhead they often fish Rock Creek. I have spoken with many outfitters who stated this. This is a small river and the month of June is ridiculous with outfitters. The outfitters race along the narrow winding dirt road hauling their trailers to get as many runs as possible in a day making travel very dangerous, not mention the additional pressure put on the river. I would like to see some outfitter restrictions placed on Rock Creek as well. I'm in favor of floating on Rock Creek.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I fish the Big Hole often and the rules have made it much better.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Consider what is best for people who just want to enjoy a fishing trip, not outfitters who want to make money. The rivers are there for us to enjoy not line pockets. The outfitters want the rules gone because that is what would be best for them, they could care less about the ordinary fisherman.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?:

Do you have any additional comments?:



I would like to support the continuation of the current rules on the Beaverhead and Big Hole rivers regarding resident and non resident use. The current rules allow uncrowded experiences for resident floats on some of Montana's most heavily used rivers. This is an incredibly good thing that a few people use in this area.

I would like to see a similiar set of rules in place for the Madison and Missouri rivers as they are far, far too crowded now for any type of quality fishing experience.



I'd like to support what appears to be an overwhelming majority of SW Montana residents who believe that the Beaverhead and Big Hole river recreation rules implemented about a decade ago are working fine and should not be changed. Resource impacts and other issues resulting from overuse of our rivers is a serious concern and ranks up there with riparian habitat degradation, development impacts, climate change, and the like. FWP has a responsibility to see that our rivers and streams and the public resources of clean water and fish and wildlife that depend on these systems are not degraded. River rules are a process that can and should be used by FWP to protect these areas.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I have several friends who are outfitters in that area, and they moved to Dillon, bought homes, and began raising families with the

intention of making a living from outfitting on the nearby rivers, only to have this regulation strip that opportunity away. Now, they must travel two hours from their homes to conduct their business. Not only are FWP and the supporters of this regulation simply diverting the overcrowding issue to another river, but they are taking resources from the local Dillon economy because outfitters and their clients are eating, lodging, and paying for fuel and supplies in another community. My friends are now looking to sell their homes and relocate to another area that allows them the opportunity to live and work in the same community, where they are not alienated.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: The rules that are in effect here are NOT helping the local economies of these communities. Businesses are struggling because the locals alone cannot support them enough to keep them in business. I lived in Dillon before these regulations were in effect, and things were hopping! Now, when I go there to visit, it's like it's not even the same place. Bars and restaurants are dead or closed, motels are empty. Sad.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I grew up on the Big Hole River. My parents and grandparents still have cabins right on the river. My parents cabin is directly across river from one of the busiest take outs on the river. From the time these regulations have been put in place, I have not seen a reduction in the amount of people/vehicles, in fact it seems busier than ever, but not with fisherman - with floating "party barges". Every day, boat after boat come down the river filled with drunken, loud, disorderly floaters who fall out of their boats, urinate on the side of the river, and peel out of the take outs with their vehicles that they are too drunk to be driving, and then hop on the winding two-lane highway. Rarely do you EVER see true fishermen out there anymore. Is this "protecting" the "citizen" days? I am afraid to let my kids play outside of my parents gate anymore for fear they will be hit by one of these maniacs. This is NOT how I remember the Big Hole of my youth.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: The overcrowding issue on the Big Hole has NOT been resolved by these regulations. It has simply been diverted to other areas of the state, a major "band-aid" on the problem. It has given the locals a feeling of self-righteous ownership over the water, that it is "theirs" and anyone not from the immediate area is "trespassing". Tourism is all but dead in the Big Hole River valley from these regulations. The bars and restaurants I grew up in are all closed or barely hanging on, everything is for sale, and the river is no less busy, just simply more dangerous with all the recreational floaters. Conservation-minded, responsible, TAX PAYING outfitters who love the outdoors, the sport of fishing, and what they do for a living are being replaced with rowdy recreational floaters who have no respect. If you are going to allow commercial guiding in this state, you need to be fair and allow equal opportunity on ALL Montana rivers, and cut the monopoly of a few outfitters that were "there first".

Do you have any additional comments?: I have a REAL problem with the fact that FWP considers the rivers of Montana to be overcrowded, and from the looks of this regulation, solely attribute it to guides and outfitters, yet the Board of Outfitters continues to dish out guide's licenses like monopoly money. Pretty much anyone with a first aid card and a few hundred bucks can become a guide in this state, and it's ridiculous. The BOO should STOP issuing guide's licenses if the data truly shows that it is the guides and outfitters causing the overcrowding. But they don't because they need the revenue from these fees to stay afloat! FWP and BOO MUST work together to come up with a plan that will work for both the outfitters and the "citizens" of this state. The current trend on outfitters of less and less rights and more and more fees is biased and unfair. I believe if the outfitting industry were portrayed to the public and the media in a more positive light by FWP, there would be more understanding and less animosity.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I have had some very pleasureable fishing days on the Beaverhead while the guides and clients are not crowding the river and the opposite when they are. It is too small of a river to continually crowd with guides as well as residents.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Off days for guides as is the case now.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : same as the Beaverhead

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?:

Do you have any additional comments?:



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Better quality experience.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Keep the rules as they are.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Better quality experience.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Keep the rules as they are.

Do you have any additional comments?: Thanks



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I have fished my favorite river the Big Hole for 48 years. On any stretch off limits to outfitters on any day of the week it is much less crowded and more enjoyable.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Instead of removing the non-resident restriction on weekends it should be applied to every day of the week. In other words have a residents day every day of the week coincidental with the outfitter restriction for a particular reach of River. Enforcement of the outfitter restriction would probably be easier too.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I take vacation days so that I can fish a favorite stretch of the River when outfitters are restricted because you do not see a flotilla of boats when floating or wade fishing.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Overcrowding by outfitters and non-residents.

Do you have any additional comments?: Please consider the residents for any rule changes.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency): Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: These rules used to affect me when I was a guide, but I did not have a problem with them. Now as a regular angler I am very glad they are in place and trying to alleviate crowding issues on this small stream.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: These rules work well. Leaving one stretch to the general Montana public on the weekends is not that much to ask. I feel like further restrictions should be considered since this river is often a bumper-boat scenario, even with the current regulations.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : These rules used to affect me when I was a guide, but I did not have a problem with them. Now as a recreational fisherman, I am very glad they are in place to insure at least one stretch of river will not be clogged with guide boats when I get some time off to enjoy this public resource.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: These rules work very well. It is great to know that there will be at least one stretch with fewer boats when I am headed to the Big Hole. I do not feel like it is an imposition on guides or non-residents. In neighboring states, entire rivers are off limits to guides. It doesn't seem like much to ask to just give up one stretch a day.

Do you have any additional comments?: FWP does a great job of managing fish and wildlife resources and recreational opportunities for Montanans. Please do not let the certain commercial interests continue to act like they own our fish and game simply because they make a living off of them.

I like the Beaverhead and Big Hole River rules the way they are at the present time. Please do not make any changes to the rules as they are at present.



I have been contacted by a few fellow anglers over the past week. It seems that [as I understand the current issues] outfitters are wanting to expand their waters on the Beaverhead and address the rotation days on the Big Hole. I'm not sure that my information is correct. However, in regards to the rules in general....I would hope that they be left as they are. I'm not sure that all the requests for changes provide a positive step for the "citizen". I can understand outfitters wanting more stretches of water open to them in order to spread themselves out. However, this can not be a one-sided change.

Our rivers should be resources of positive experiences for the people of Montana. It was social conflict that created the need for setting up a structure to allow the multiple use of these waterways. The 1999 program seems to have worked well over the years. And in 2005, the single boat outfitter was given space on the Big Hole. This year, the guide's log of use on the Big Hole is no longer required...(as I understand). Therefore it is perceived that there is less ability to monitor the launches and/or days of launch on any particular section of this river by the guides....even though the outfitter is to be responsible for these records. I would not recommend a change that would be another advantage to commercial use without protecting and/or enhancing the "citizens" opportunities on the rivers.

I may not have all (or even many) of my facts correct,...but in general,...be cautious to give more opportunities to commercial use because this will be viewed as a turning of a back on the citizens' use.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: The rules allow a better quality fishing experience.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the

Beaverhead River?: Do not change the float outfitting restrictions.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The rules allow a better quality fishing experience.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Do not change the float outfitting restrictions.

Do you have any additional comments?: I think these rules have worked well.



There was a great deal of input from all sectors when these regs. were adopted. The present regulations are reasonable and fair. You didn't really think going to the public to consider more time for outfitters would be greeted warmly, did you? Just leave the policies as they are.



These are my comments on the Big Hole River Questions----- 1. The rules have helped me to enjoy fishing the river on the days the outfitters are not allowed. The experience of what fishing should be like, not crowded and commercialized.

2.Keep the rules the same as they are, no more commeralization.

3.The way the meeting was conducted was not to my liking. It seemed like it was all cut and dry. Comments could not be made publicly, only to a person one on one. There was no public discussion, only private comments to be made to the commision members present. I think the commisioners should watch the PBS program on the National Parks to see what the experience of fishing should really be like, enjoying the solitude of nature and the great outdoors.



Last year I was informed that each time I take my three daughters kayaking on the Big Hole River we are breaking the rules of boating use on that river. The rule states that no more than three “boats” can be

launched at any one site on the river. I suspect that the term “boat” originally meant a fishing craft such as a raft or drift boat. I have been kayaking the Big Hole, mainly the canyon section where there’s about 3 miles of class II+ whitewater, for about 20 years (usually with several friends), and have been kayaking the Big Hole with my daughters for 7 years. Evidently I have been breaking this rule for all those years – or for as long as that particular rule was made (2000?). American Whitewater states that kayakers should paddle in **at least** groups of three people and preferably more for safety purposes. Whereas an average 14 foot raft can fit at least 8 people comfortably, a typical kayak can only fit one person. Families who enjoy using the river for kayaking purposes should be able to do so without being restricted by unsafe and unnecessary rules that were probably meant for fishing craft. I am urging you to change the wording of this part of the Beaverhead/Big Hole rules.

Last year I was informed that each time I kayak with two or more friends on the Big Hole River we are breaking the rules of boating use on that river. The rule states that no more than three “boats” can be launched at any one site on the river. I suspect that the term “boat” originally meant a fishing craft such as a raft or drift boat. I have been kayaking the Big Hole, mainly the canyon section where there’s about 3 miles of class II+ whitewater, for about 20 years (usually with several friends), and have been kayaking the Big Hole with our sons and our boy scout troop for five years . Evidently I have been breaking this rule for all those years – or for as long as that particular rule was made (2000?). The American Whitewater Association states that kayakers should paddle in **at least** groups of three people and preferably more for safety purposes. Whereas an average 14 foot raft can fit at least 8 people comfortably, a typical kayak (6’ to 8’) can only fit one person and does not lend itself to fishing. Families who enjoy using the river for kayaking purposes should be able to do so without being restricted by unsafe and unnecessary rules that were probably meant for fishing craft. Whitewater kayakers (in decked boats) cannot fish and paddle at the same time. I am urging you to change the wording of this part of the Beaverhead/Big Hole rules.



Please leave present rulings on fishing the Beaverhead River as they are. It seems to me that we of the public have already given more than what is fair to the area outfitters. It appears that people come into Montana, find it a fishermens/hunters paradise; then try to bottle it up for personal profiteering. Why is the Fish Wildlife and Parks so ready and willing to allow this to happen? People come into this area, see the beauty and tranquility, the pleasures of the area and then want to capitolize on any others who want to fish or hunt these areas. They buy it up, close the gates and take over public areas for personal gain.

Why do we keep letting these people continue to take over our rights, our liberties, our country and our religions? WHY? For money, power, greed?
Anti-freedom, anti-guns, anti-religion, they all wish to take it all and give back nothing.



I was just informed that I have been breaking the rules of boating use on the Big Hole River for over 10 years. The rule states that no more than three “boats” can be launched at any one site on the river. I suspect that the term “boat” originally meant a fishing craft such as a raft or drift boat. I learned to kayak on the Big Hole, mainly the canyon section where there’s about 3 miles of class II+ whitewater, and have taught numerous people how to kayak on that same stretch. Most of these outings, especially with beginners, involved more than 3 people and as a safety consideration the more people, generally the safety learning to kayak becomes. American Whitewater states that kayakers should paddle in **at least** groups of three people and preferably more for safety purposes.

People who enjoy using the river for kayaking purposes should be able to do so without being restricted by unsafe and unnecessary rules that were probably meant for fishing craft. I am urging you to change the wording of this part of the Beaverhead/Big Hole rules.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: The rules have allowed opportunities to float and fish the upper reaches of the river without competing with commercial/non-resident uses. I started floating the Beaverhead in 1978. At that time you knew everyone. I used to fish the upper section 4 to 5 nights per week. I now only fish the upper section occasionally on citizen days.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Be sure not to compromise with any attempts to open the closed section between Tash Bridge and Park Street to commercial use. This section is the only place left along the entire reach of the Beaverhead River that one can get away from the arrogant guides that crowd the upper reaches

of the river. This section is reflective of how the river was before it became overrun with commercial use.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I plan my fishing trips accordingly to the reaches that are closed to commercial and non -resident float fishing. It is not always where I want to fish but it is worth it to get out of the congestion that is present on the more popular reaches of the river.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: The rules on the Bighole are working as designed and should not be changed at all!!

Do you have any additional comments?: There should be some kind of effort by the Board of Outfitters or FWP to educate guides on river etiquette and how their arrogant attitude reflects on their profession. Not all guides are like this but there is a fair amount that try and bully others and act as if they deserve to be there.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: Yes

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: As an outfitter on the Big Hole and Beaverhead Rivers, I deal with these rules on a daily basis during the season. I started out as a guide when the rules were adopted the first year, and since have become an outfitter. These rules are all I have ever known in the industry. I do not have the negative feelings associated with the rules that a lot of other outfitters do, but the restrictions still play a roll in my day to day business. I ran out of room in the Beaverhead River comment form so I'll finish here. I believe that the upper river would benefit greatly if Tash to Trash were open to guide boats during the summer, Monday - Friday. It would spread of some traffic and leave more open water all over the river. Due it it's character, T-T can not take much pressure, and when there are 3 boats on it in the am, the others will go elsewhere. Self regulated.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: The first in clarifying what river are we floating on when we launch at Jesson Park in Twin Bridges? After looking at the State of Montana's view point from Madison County, the Jefferson River is declared to start at the confluence of the Beaverhead and Ruby Rivers. This is in contradiction to

everyone's belief that the Jeff starts at the confluence of the Beaverhead and Big Hole. Due to this fact, we are proposing to make the Jesson Park launch a Jefferson River Trip. Secondly, I'd like to ask FWP find an access point at Point of Rocks. I informed Kirk that there are 3 separate 50 acre tracts of land for sale on the River directly across from Point of Rocks. You could acquire a parcel, have an access point, campground, etc. Lastly, get rid of the regs below Selway Bridge. This would relieve pressure up top, provide more opportunity for river ranges to handle higher pressure elsewhere. Or, split the reaches from selway-POR, and POR to Jesson Park. One boat per section.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Same as comment in Beaverhead Section. Big Hole Rules obviously cover each day of the week, so we are limited a little more by the regs on this river. At the end of the day, we are all here for the rivers, and if we lose sight of that then none of us are going to have a place to fish and enjoy.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Big Hole rules seem to be working well. There is a lot of river to row and fish, and I don't need the same stretch to fish every day. The only thing that I will say is that during low water there are some stretches that close off A LOT of river due to low flows. You can not make it from Divide to Maiden Rock without pushing during August, and it's closed from Divide to Melrose during that certain day. Same goes from E. Bank to Jerry Creek...very long way even in high water.

Do you have any additional comments?: I gathered the feeling at the Butte meeting people that the outfitters wanted to "take the wheels off" the regs. As you notice through this report, and the others you will be receiving, that is not the case. We all agree that some regulation is good for the fishery. We have come up with some items that have no GIANT impact on the day to day use of theses rivers for the general public. I thank you for allowing us to voice our opinions, and hope that we are all able to come to a agreed up conclusion.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I have enjoyed very good and uncrowded fishing on the stretched of river days that have been closed to guiding of non-residents on a given day. The current rules work and do not need to be changed as the primary beneficiary of any

changes would be the outfitting/guiding business who want to make even more money off of a public resource.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: I think the Commission's primary goal in evaluating the rules should be the health of the river and fishery. The fish above Barrett's are heavily pressured during the summer and I believe it is good to give the fish a break by reducing pressure by rotating the stretches that are open to guiding of non-residents. I also think the Commission should give much greater weight to rules that serve to benefit Montana's residents as a whole, i.e. the rules should not be changed for the benefit of the outfitting industry at the expense of the general public. The outfitting industry is similar to commercial fisheries, in that I think they all operate in their own self interests and will not take collective actions to preserve the resource.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I have enjoyed very good and uncrowded fishing on the stretched of river days that have been closed to guiding of non-residents on a given day. I have had some of the best fishing I have ever experienced in Montana when floating the river during the salmon fly hatch on sections of river closed to non-resident guiding on that particular day. The current rules work and do not need to be changed as the primary beneficiary of any changes would be the outfitting/guiding business who want to make even more money off of a public resource.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I think the Commission's primary goal in evaluating the rules should be the health of the river and fishery. The fish above Barrett's are heavily pressured during the summer and I believe it is good to give the fish a break by reducing pressure by rotating the stretches that are open to guiding of non-residents. I also believe the Commission should give much greater weight to rules that serve to benefit Montana's residents as a whole, i.e. the rules should not be changed for the benefit of the outfitting industry at the expense of the general public. The outfitting industry is similar to commercial fisheries, in that I think they all operate in their own self interests and will not take collective actions to preserve the resource.

Do you have any additional comments?: Please do not amend the current rules, as they are working well. The rules should not be amended just because some outfitters desire to make even more money off these two resources which are owned by the people of the State of Montana. The Commission's primary goal should be preserving these resources for Montanans.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Sat. and Sun. Residents Day Sections are enjoyable to fish on the upper river but are not during the week days. The section above High Bridge is very unpleasant to fish because it is too crowded any days of the week. The Section from Tash to Trash is enjoyable to fish any day of the week. In my opinion the Beaverhead Plan works very well for the public because there is always a section option to fish without feeling crowded and without competing with commercialized professional fishermen. There seems to be a problem on the dam to High Bridge Section with crowding created by fishing outfitters, but after reading the past Commission meetings minutes, I agree with Stan Myers, a past commission member, that the outfitters need to take care of the problem among themselves. It seems like any sections that are not regulated strictly by FWP on the Beaverhead becomes crowded with outfitter use.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Before the Commission considers any changes on the Beaverhead River see what the outfitters can do to eliminate overcrowding on the dam to High Bridge section. I've heard rumors at the public meetings in Butte and Dillon, that outfitters would like more boat launches on Section 5 of the river, I disagree. This would create crowding on Section 5 if there were additional outfitter launches, due to a lack of public fishing access sites on section 5 to help spread out the use. By their example, the outfitters set on the dam to high bridge, seven days a week, they seem to be unable to self-regulate their use to deal with crowding. The outfitters need to take responsibility for crowding issues themselves before the regulations are changed.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The Big Hole River Rules have had a positive affect. Before rules My family and I had almost stopped fishing on the Big Hole in some sections due to overcrowding. The fishery has benefitted and certainly the fishermen/women. We love residents day and the seven day rotation for outfitter use. The experience of fishing the Big Hole has become a good one again due to the rules. Do not change a thing.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Leave the rules as they are. They are working.

Do you have any additional comments?: These comments deal with both rivers. There seems to be a problem with the way the department is dealing with the transfer of allocated days. The department is allowing days to be transferred even though the outfitter's entire business is not being sold in accordance with MCA 37-47-310 #4. My belief that the intent of the law, was that the entire outfitting

business must be sold and transferred, not just part of the outfitting business. After looking at the FWP document dealing with violations and investigations of violations, the FWP needs to have a policy in place to audit the compliance of the river rec. rules that complies with the State River rec. rules. With the loss of the outfitter FWP log books, there is no policy in place that will give you the quality of auditing that the log books seem to achieve.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: the rules are great i enjoy fishing on residents day and tash to trash

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: keep the rules as they are

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : i enjoy fishing the big hole any day of the week because there is always a place i can fish without competing with the outfitters. I really like residents day it's a great time to be there with your family

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: leave the rules as they are

Do you have any additional comments?:



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Mt.

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: They have affected me

personally, because there have been many times where I have taken my family floating on days and on reaches of the Beaverhead when I should be able to expect a low key float and fishing trip without contending with guided anglers, both resident and non resident. I have yet to float from High Bridge to Henneberry and not be harassed or treated unpleasantly by out of state fishermen or guides. The worst part has been on at least 2 occasions when an out of state Utah resident, had their vehicle parked at the put in at high bridge and was right in the way and you had to pack your boat around their rig to put in. I guess the rules affect me, because I assume that I will be able to take my family on the river in a specific location and that folks will be following the rules, and they usually are not. This has caused my family and myself to find other areas to float and fish where there is less traffic.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: That the rules controlling guided fishing access on the rivers need to maintain a level of control that provides for the residents day to be enjoyed by residents with their families. There are plenty of opportunities for those who are guiding fishermen to make a living. Offering a few non-hassle days to families so their kids can learn to fish while enjoying the river and not having to contend with a bunch of people only there to fill their wallets with out of state money should be a right afforded to the residents of Montana.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : They have made it so that there are only a few different areas my family and I will float and fish to avoid the crowds.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Consider the things that make the river a focal point for the residents and families of Montana, it isn't to see how many people from out of state are fishing and wearing the latest fashions, it is for the enjoyment of the water and the quality time spent with your family.

Do you have any additional comments?: When evaluating the use of any piece of country the overall objectives guiding that discussion should be the user group. The type of use which represents the numbers by user type. If 25% of the user group are guided fisherman, then 25% of the time the rules should suite that user group, just like, if 62% of the people who are represented in a user survey feel that river should remain as is, then 62% of the time, the type of use should reflect that group. Changing rules to facilitate the over use of our rivers to please guides is not a favorable solution. If we go this route, we can probably foresee floating by permit only something which occurs in the near future.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: It has reduced overcrowding and improved the overall experience.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: I believe the current rules are working and if it's not broken then it should not be fixed.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Same as the Beaverhead

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Same as the Beaverhead

Do you have any additional comments?:



HOME STATE IS MONTANA

NOT A LICENSED GUIDE

BEAVERHEAD RIVER:

I RARELY FISH THE BEAVERHEAD. THE FEW TIMES THAT I HAVE, IT WAS FRUSTRATING TO FIND A BOAT OR RAFT ANCHORED IN THE HOLES.

I MAY TRY FISHING THE SECTIONS OF THE RIVER THAT DOES NOT ALLOW GUIDING.

THE BEAVERHEAD IS SO NARROW THAT TOO MANY BOATS OR RAFTS JUST TAKE AWAY THE ENJOYMENT. I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT THE SOLUTIONS CAN BE.

BIG HOLE RIVER:

THE RULES HAVE MADE ME FISH THE BIG HOLE MORE OFTEN. WE USUALLY FISH THE SECTIONS ON THE DAYS THAT ARE RESIDENT ONLY.

I THINK THE RULES HAVE MADE THE BIG HOLE A BETTER FISHERY AND MORE ENJOYABLE FOR EVERYONE, THIS INCLUDES THE CLIENTS OF THE GUIDES.

THE RULES :

IF THE SYSTEM WORKS, LET'S NOT BREAK IT!



I have a fly shop in Melrose and been watching this issue on the Big Hole from the start.

The changes I would like to see is:

1 The seven day reach is not working I would like to see the reach issue done except Saturday and Sunday

Reason: When you close a section of the river you crowd the other sections of the river. Besides the public don't mind floating with Guides and Outfitters and I got proof.

I can live with giving the public their citizen day on Sat and Sun,

2 The peak period should be shorten to about 7/1 or 7/4

Reason The public that is against the Guides and Outfitters are not floating or fishing much after 7/1, They lik to fish the salmon flies and go to other rivers to chase the flies.

Shorten the peak period would help me to run my business because I run out of days and I have to go to other riversand crowd them where I can stay in my back yard. I would like to invite any one to come and sit at my shop and watch where the boats and fisherman go and I would show how the 7 day reach is not working. I am a small outfitters also and grew up on the big hole and would like to continue to work on this river and not go some other river. People move in from other states ond want this rivers to them selves and I can't work on the river I grew up on



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : There is more controlled fishing, which is better. Where the outfitters are that day I will try another spot. Myself and my group do not mind moving to an area that has no commercial floating on any given day. Seems to work. The commercial outfitters get their \$ and we get our day.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I believe the rules in place "NOW" work well enough! In five years let's take another "look" and see where there might be a problem. There is a nice "QUOTE" to be used here. IF IT'S AIN'T BROKE DON'T FIX IT!!!! Amen

Do you have any additional comments?: I do... Seems the more out of state's that move here and buy their piece of the rock, the more they want to change OUR WAY OF LIFE. In the Wise River area there are a few that want changes on the Big Hole River to satisfy their hunger to control their own agenda. They not only have the big houses and money they want to control what can make them more money. Butte and the surrounding area will fight long and hard to protect OUR way of life. There are hundreds of us and only a few of them.



I support the Beaverhead and Big Hole river rules as they are, please don't change them. I oppose opening the making rule process for fear that residence day and section of the river closed to float outfitting will be changed.

I have been Kayaking the Big Hole River for 24 years. I have been teaching Kayaking for 18 of those 24 years. The other Instructors and I teach kayak rolling, precise maneuvering and most important rescue! This is done in an indoor pool. We then take the student down the Big Hole River. This includes the area from the Dewey put in to the take out at the Silver Bridge. We place an expert ahead of the beginner kayaker one or two kayakers along side and at least one expert behind the beginner kayaker. When the beginner kayaker turns the kayak over we respond immediately to the rescue! We have never had a

incident and plan never to have one! To maintain these safety standards the number of seasoned expert kayakers should not and can not be LIMITED! These water craft are not multiple boats only one person occupies them at one time. It should noted that we float down the white water section of the river. If we come upon people fishing we have instructed the new student to avoid the fishing boats and people on the shore by floating on the opposite side of the river. I was born in Butte Montana and have lived here most of my life. River usage and recreating belongs to everone. River Safety is a matter of Life and Death and will not be compromised under any conditions or regulations!



I would like to see some small changes to the current rules. Before I get into the particulars as it pertains to the rules I would like to say that the majority of the rules in their current form are working well. I believe that getting rid of the log books is a big mistake and a setback for what we are all trying to accomplish. Without the log books FWP has no real check and balance in place and I think that this will allow certain outfitters and out of state outfitters to start illegal outfitting again.

I would like to break down the rules as they pertain to the individual rivers.

Beaverhead: I would like to see the reach from Tash Ranch down to the dump road re-opened to outfitting during the summer season. This piece of water is basically void of fishermen from the third Saturday in May through labor day weekend. Allowing outfitting in this section would help disperse some of the congestion on the upper river from the dam down to Barretts. I would like to see each outfitter be able to run 1 boat per day. This piece is very self regulating do to the size and water flow. If I were to show up at Tash to run a day and there were two or more boats in front of me I would go somewhere else. The other change that I would like to see is the piece of water from Selway to Twin Bridges be broken up into two reaches. Right now an outfitter is only allowed to run one boat on this piece of water. Granted, it is only 26 miles from Selway to Twin but there is roughly 60 miles of water that is broken up into 4 different sections. It makes a lot of sense to form two different sections here. One from Selway to Beaverhead Rock and the other from Beaverhead Rock to Twin Bridges. This again might help spread out outfitters and give everybody a better fishing experience. I would also like to see the Beaverhead River end at Jessen Park in Twin Bridges for simplicity and allow other outfitters the opportunity to fish the upper end of the Jefferson without having a permit.

Big Hole: Everything seems to be working great. Again, I would like to see the log books come back. One thing I would like to see change is the non-resident restriction be lifted on the weekends. This has been a failure and I feel is unfair to the tourists that come here to enjoy our state. As an outfitter I have

learned to live with the restrictions and abide by the rules but people traveling to or through should not have to have a PHD to figure out where to go fish. I would also like to see the Big Hole River end at the high road and allow other outfitters the ability to fish the upper end of the Jefferson. This is a mute point at the present time due to the fact we do not have a boat ramp at high road anymore but the clarification should still be made

I would hope that some of these ideas are considered for the next phase of these rules. I would also like to thank the department for taking the time to consider making these changes.



Nina Norum and I are nonresidents of Montana, but we have fished the Big Hole River each year for more than about 25 years. We are Legacy members of the MWF, members of Trout Unlimited, and have individual Life Time memberships in the BHRF. Our comments regarding regulations for the Big Hole River are as follows:

- 1) We support maintaining the present Recreational Management Plan and regulations for the Big Hole River.
- 2) We believe that the present Recreational Management Plan and other regulations have worked well as a minimum.
- 3) We believe the present Recreational Management Plan has enhanced the quality of the fishing experience.
- 4) We I believe that the present Recreational Management Plan reduces the pressure on the fish by reducing continuous use and overcrowding, especially by floaters.
- 5) We believe that the 7-day rotation and closing on Saturday and Sunday of particular sections to nonresident float fishing reduces the float fishing pressure, which puts more pressure on the fish than wade fishing or fishing from shore.
- 6) We believe that based on river days, float fishing results in more fish being caught per angler day than wade fishing; thus, closing a section to float fishing puts less pressure on the fish.
- 7) We believe the fishing pressure by a guided floater is greater (due to the need for a guide “earn his keep”) than the fishing pressure by the average resident floater.
- 8) We would favor more regulations to reduce pressure on the fish.

- 9) We would like consideration given to closing more sections on a 7-day rotation, especially to float fishing, possibly closing some sections for long periods.
- 10) We would like consideration given to closing a section of the Big Hole, on a rotational basis, for the entire season.

We appreciate the efforts put forth by all those concerned with the Big Hole. This river is a unique natural resource which our children have enjoyed and treasured. I hope we can say the same for our grandchildren.



There are a few comments I'd like to make on the rules of the Big Hole and Beaverhead regulations. I believe limiting outfitters to a specific number of historical use days is and has been one of the worst mistakes that has ever been enacted. This has created a "black market" for these days in which only the richest of new outfitters may buy into leaving those of us who were born and raised on the Big Hole with little or no recourse if we wish to start our own business. Recently, a local outfitter who wanted out of outfitting and had over 1100 historical use days, sold these days on the Big Hole and Beaverhead for over \$300 per day for a tidy profit of well over \$300,000! I can't believe this was the original intent of these rules but is a major unintended consequence. The worst of all is, this price per day is frankly on the low end of the price range with days reportedly now going for \$450 and \$500 per day! How can a person like myself, who wants to live and work here, compete with rich out-of-state interests? The answer under the current rules is I can't unless I have substantial bank account or trust fund with which to back me up. I can see this going in only one direction. A small portion of businesses will control a majority of these rivers therefore creating a powerful oligopoly by slowly buying up smaller competitors. This is already happening as several outfitters in the area have their days for sale, but at the current pricing levels who can afford them? This will not be good for anyone involved.



There is a better way to move forward by increasing competition and keeping overcrowding on the most popular stretches to acceptable levels by enacting the following changes:

1. Eliminate the historical use days and replace them with launches per day for each outfitter. Limit an outfitter to say one or two boats per stretch with a nominal fee for each boat launched. This will stop each outfitter from monopolizing a stretch and spread out the impact while increasing the revenue for the state for fishing access improvement and weed control. Violators of this rule will have a progressive set of penalties set upon them with the minimum being a fine and maximum being a

outright loss of fishing rights for say a year. If enforcing this would be a problem, give incentives to those that report a violation.

2. Keep in place the residents only days. While I don't necessarily agree with them, I believe it is good on a P.R. standpoint.

3. If overcrowding on a certain stretch does become a significant problem, then enact a higher fee for each outfitter launch from that site. So say if Divide to Melrose is congested then raise that launch to \$50 to \$100 per boat or even while leaving Notch to Pennington at \$5. When the stretch fee starts digging into the outfitter's bottom line, the outfitter will naturally choose the lower cost solution.

If the current rules are continued, then an outfitter who wants out of outfitting must be forced to relinquish their days back to the state to be offered to those of us who wish to begin outfitting or to grow our current businesses. Those who have historical days never paid for them, why should we? Finally, if an outfitter has these days then he should justify this quantity and use them. If they aren't used then they should also go back to the state for distribution amongst active and future outfitters instead of being sold for an outrageous price.

In summary, the "Black Market" days on the Big Hole and Beaverhead must be eliminated. By limiting an outfitter to a fee based launch per day, overcrowding can be held in check. I would appreciate a response for my comments if possible.



I wish to express my view that weekend Big Hole River use by non-residents should not be limited. Weekend use by outfitters is already restricted, so non-residents using an outfitter are already restricted. The State has the authority and responsibility to regulate such commercial activities, but the use by individuals seems to me to be different. Non-residents pay more for a fishing license and they spend money on food, lodging, equipment, etc that supports our local economy. Their presence should be welcomed rather than discouraged.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?:

Do you have any additional comments?: The current rules are working. No changes necessary.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MONTANA

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Allowing more than two kayaks to launch at the same time without breaking the rules as they are now written.

Do you have any additional comments?: The rules on the number of vessels launching should more accurately reflect the number of people that are on the river. Kayaks typically carry one person while rafts and driftboats could potentially carry up to six or eight people each. I can understand fishing parties not wanting to contend with a dozen kayaks hanging out in a fishing hole and would like to see

the FWP come up with a reasonable number of kayaks that can be launched at one time. I've always been taught that four kayakers is a good idea from a safety standpoint. If one kayaker has trouble or even gets pinned one can go for help leaving two people to try and help the the fourth boater.



I concur with John Amtmann that 5-10 kayakers is a reasonable number for a boating group.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : With the pressure off from floating/fishing traffic on river, it makes it easier to fish the best holes.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Protect the fishery from overfishing. Give native Montanans a chance to fish parts of the river without the congestion from guides and out-of-state fishermen.

Do you have any additional comments?: I brag that the Beaverhead and Bighole rivers are the best regulated rivers in the U.S. with the current regulations. When my buddies and I go for a float/fish, you can tell the sections of the river that are open to the guides and out-of-state floaters/fishers. It is like night and day. It is so refreshing to come to the section where they are restricted. It is like it was when I was a kid fishing with my Dad and Uncle. Finally, I read an article in the Alaskan Airlines magazine a few years ago regarding fishing in Alaska. The article from a native Alaskan stated he does not fish the streams he used to fish as a kid because of the guides and out-of-staters overcrowding the river. Let us natives have part of the river at different times without the awful congestion.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: Yes

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: They have not created any major problems over all. But they do need some refining as for why the 5 year review was put into place.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: There are some adjustments that are needed such as splitting the downstream 60 plus miles of river into 2 reaches to help with any congestion on the week-ends and during the week. IE; split Selway to Jesson into 2 reaches. Selway to Point of Rocks(Beaverhead Rock)& Point of Rocks (Beaverhead Rock) to Jessen Park. Open Hwy 91 to Selway bridge on weekends to help some elevation of traffic on the upper river as this section is closed 7 days a week right now. Define the rules as ending at Jesson Park because if you are using this access as a put'in you are fishing the Jefferson River as it is the first put'in to get into the Jefferson and you are only on the Beaverhead/ Jefferson for approximately 3/8's of a mile before you are truly on the Jefferson & there is some question as to who state federal agencies as to the defining point of the start of the Jefferson..

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : They have caused a little more trouble than the Beaverhead but still again not any major problems. But they do need some adjustments again which is why the 5 year review was put into place.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I would like them to remove 5 of the 7 day a week restriction Monday- Friday as it is not used by the general public. Defined by shuttle services & your own Wardens who are looking for traffic on the river. Doing their jobs and finding no won in those closed to outfitter sections. If this is too much change then maybe just Monday-Wednesday. would be more agreeable to everyone involved..

Do you have any additional comments?: Yes, I would also like to add the comment on a language change in the rule now there is a word (lapse). I would like the commissioners to change this to (expire). Reason being is there is no clear definition & it doesn't correspond with MBO rules (Dept. of labor & industry) as to when an outfitter would lose privileges or inability to continue to operate as an outfitter on these two rivers. I would also like to say as a fisherman. That the changes I have requested are not going to

impose on any ones rights. But, they will give the outfitters a better chance at creating a more stable buisness.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: The Big Hole river has a lot of recreation to offer. I understand this because I have lived out in Wise River the past three years. Last summer alone I floated the Big Hole over sixty times. Some days I would take my raft out fishing, other days I would team up with some buddies and go kayaking. Kayaking is a growing sport because it is fun and it's exciting. I am glad that I am part of such a awesome outdoor activity. The funnest days I have had on the river usually involve my brother and I, plus a few other buddies. More boats in the water usually makes for a safer trip, and the number one goal for kayakers is to get down the river safe. Montana is a great place to experience the outdoors, and I hope that the FWP understands that Southwest Montana is home to a number of kayakers who love to head out to the the Big Hole and paddle for an afternoon of fun and excitement.

Do you have any additional comments?: I also would like to add that I have never ran into any trouble on the river, kayaking or rafting. Usually when I see an outfitter or any other person fishing and say "Hi, how's the fishing?" and then move on down the river.



River Rules should be left as is--as they stand now, without change. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The rules have worked well for these fragile natural resources. If anything, outfitters need to be limited to one boat per day.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: The rules have affected where, when and how often I recreate on the river, including fishing, floating, walking/swimming my dog. The rules also affect the quality of my experience, they dictate whether or not I have an opportunity to experience solitude, or crowding and when over crowded, have discouraged me from recreating on the river altogether. I did not fish once last year, so am having to evaluate if it is worth obtaining a license this year or not. The rules also affect where I can take nonresident family members fishing.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Please consider closing stretch #4 (Poindexter slough area) to nonresidents and outfitters. This is a popular spot for residents, particularly families due to the close proximity to Dillon and good access. This is an area where many residents introduce their children to outdoor recreation, including fishing, big game hunting and bird hunting. It has a special sense of place for residents. I see increasing numbers of nonresident license plates in the parking lots that serve Poindexter. I understand that other rivers and other segments of the Beaverhead are crowded, and even overcrowded and the drive for people to fill up other areas. I think the solution is to preserve this segment that is so special to residents and restrict numbers of outfitters on the Beaverhead and address crowding on other rivers at the same time.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The rules affect where, when and how I recreate on the river, including fishing and floating. The conflict between ranchers, outfitters, environmentalists, floaters and anglers over the issues of crowding and water levels affects my relationships with fellow residents. Issues on the Big Hole are heating up with no signs of abating and are increasingly becoming voting issues.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Uncrowded experiences and sufficient water for a designated purpose are dwindling commodities. Conflicts are increasingly becoming voting issues and resident concerns must be heard above all others. I propose two items. One is to continue to measure user numbers and cut nonresident opportunities (days) and outfitter client days to maintain a status quo of total user numbers. Second, I propose closing the segment of river between Glen and Notch Bottom to nonresidents. This is a difficult to access portion of river except for residents and provides more of an uncrowded angling opportunity to residents than can be found elsewhere on the Big Hole.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?:

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?:

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: Please consider increasing the number of launches per day for kayakers. My observation is that kayakers are respectful of fisherman and avoid them whenever possible. A reasonable increase in the number of launches per day for kayakers should have little impact on fisherman and fishing sites along the Big Hole.

Do you have any additional comments?: Thank you for your attention to this matter.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: The Beaverhead River is important to me and my family in providing an exceptional local resource for our river recreation. I can easily enjoy the Beaverhead after work, and I know where I can fish with the least competition from commercial users. The rules are also important to me because I am reassured that these conditions can be maintained for local people in the future.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: In general, do not change the rules of these two rivers. If anything, add a requirement for outfitters and their guides to periodically attend etiquette courses. While there are some excellent outfitters and guides on these rivers, many make no effort to conceal their disdain for the non-outfitted public, especially bank-fishers. They seem unable to politely acknowledge these fishers with a friendly wave or greeting, even when spoken to by the other fisher. I know there can be two sides to this, but many outfitters also think nothing of floating over bank fishers' lines, and ignore a reasonable distance between themselves and non-outfitted fishers, especially if they are intent on crowding the latter out of an area. Sadly, this demonstration teaches such bad manners to their clients, as well. This arrogance and competitive attitude diminishes the river current experience for everyone, and creates an unpromising vision of the future.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : The Big Hole River has an important and special place in my life and family memories. While I recognize that recreation demand and populations are changing, I place much of the river's value in being able to taste the nostalgic Big Hole experienced years ago by our old family friends, George Grant and Fran Johnson. I recognize that the Big Hole will never again be a place where one can experience such ready access, combined with the trophy fishing and solitude those gentlemen knew; that time has passed. However, it can remain a special river, and the river rules provide for that possibility by limiting growth and commercial exploitation. This maintains a current and future opportunity for both residents and non-residents to experience this incredible river in a more sublime state.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: The purpose of outfitting is to provide a recreation experience for those without the skills, knowledge or equipment to provide a comparable experience for themselves. The true nature of fishing requires that this takes time, so it is understandable that outfitters are valuable to people who have inadequate time. Outfitting should exist for the purpose of helping people have a successful and enjoyable time on the river, not to commercially exploit a publically-owned resource. This is why outfitting must continue to be controlled. The rules provide days and stretches that residents can count on for being less-crowded by outfitted floating traffic. Because these rules exist, residents can also enjoy

some certainty that the quality resource and specialness of the Big Hole and Beaverhead Rivers will persevere for future generations of residents and non-residents alike. I do worry that every five years commercial interests will press harder to weaken these rules.

Do you have any additional comments?: In general, FWP must understand the threat that recreation displacement poses to many of Montana's rivers. A fair amount of the increased pressure experienced on these two rivers has been caused by displaced fishers and floaters from the Madison and other relatively close rivers. A comprehensive state-wide study should be conducted to determine desired conditions. Place a limit on commercial use now in order to preserve the solitude unfortunately lost on the Big Hole and Beaverhead, but still attainable on other rivers. If FWP waits until crowding becomes a problem on those rivers as well, the opportunity for solitude on a river will be forever lost. Montana's river recreation will be a homogenous experience of high use, creating a frustrating sense of competition for "old-timers" and a new and unfortunate norm for "newcomers".



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: MT

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: Yes

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Yes

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: I would like them to consider the State River Management Plan that should be used in this review. Having 2 sections of the Beaverhead river closed on both Saturday and Sunday does not address crowding, it causes more crowding on the few available sections to the guided public. Consider the FWP use data for the past 12 years. The numbers of users have been steadily dropping suggesting that these rules that only effect the guided public could be relaxed some. There are not restrctions on the general public, only the guided public and this is not right. Again look at the state River Management Plan. I would support splitting the lower section of the river into two sections: this would take a few boats away from the upper river especially on the weekend when two sections are closed to the guided public.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Yes

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big

Hole River?: Relaxing the rules here as well, since the user data does not suggest the continued discrimination of the guided public.

Do you have any additional comments?: I am not suggesting they scrap the B & B rules but just relax the restrictions on the guided public. I would also like to see a continued review every 5 years.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: mt

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: yes

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: When my son comes home from Idaho he's not allowed to fish from a boat on parts of the river on Saturday and Sunday. He was a resident of Montana for 30 plus years, it is WRONG that Montana FWP choses to discriminate against our children that have moved out of state. His license for a couple days is more expensive than a resident season license so he surely is paying his fair share.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? :

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?:

Do you have any additional comments?:



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: Since I live year round in Divide,

I rarely fish the Beaverhead River, so the rules do not affect me that much. However, the times I do fish the Beaverhead, I select a stretch that the outfitters and guides are not supposed to be floating.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: Reduce or enforce the number of floats an outfitter or guide can make on river sections.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : Living on the river year round, I witness the volume of boats floating by. FWP has data to prove or perhaps disapprove my belief that the majority of floaters are outfitters and guides. It appears to me that some guides do not respect the limited number of floats they are allowed on a daily basis for a section of the river. Citizen days are a welcomed relief from the pressure on the river which are the days I prefer to fish. Where I go fishing is influenced by which section of the river is closed to outfitters and guides.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: I am aware that the number of outfitters and guides on the Big Hole are limited to an existing number. I sincerely believe that number should be reduced, and a suggested way would be to not allow the license to be transferred once one is offered up or relinquished. Outfitters and guides pound the heck out of that river. Outfitters and guides cry foul the loudest when the river is closed to fishing due to low flow rates and high temperatures. Hunting guides are only allowed to conduct their guided hunts in designated areas. I would like to see that rule applied to fishing guides as well.

Do you have any additional comments?: When something attains or has an economic basis or status, then the perspective of that entity takes on a different meaning to the beholder. If floating or fishing on the Big Hole and the Beaverhead rivers is based upon economic value, then the real value of those rivers is lost.



What is your home state? (where you claim residency)?: Montana

Are you a licensed fishing outfitter or guide?: No

How have the rules on the Beaverhead River affected you personally?: I schedule and enjoy a quality float on non commercial days.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Beaverhead River?: The rule is working as is don't mess with it.

How have the rules on the Big Hole River affected you personally? : I schedule quality floats on now commercial days.

What would you like most for the FWP Commission to consider when evaluating the rules for the Big Hole River?: The rules are working don't mess with them.

Do you have any additional comments?:



Please amend the recommendation I had for the Beaverhead in question #2. From Tash Bridge downstream to Selway Bridge (Tash to Trash), my new recommendation to replace the hand-written one I mailed in is to allow outfitters to float/guide on this stretch on weekends. During the week, I recommend outfitters would not be able to float/guide on this stretch and make it non-commercial use. Thank you.



The reason why the Beaverhead and Big Hole River rules were adopted was crowding and conflicts on the rivers. The River Rules have reduced crowding and greatly reduced conflict. Prior to the rules I often had anxiety about going fishing on the Beaverhead or Big Hole, conflicts were inevitable. Many anglers quit fishing these rivers because of the crowding and conflicts. On the resident's day sections of the rivers the crowding is reduced and the conflicts are minimal. On resident's day sections there is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. There are families with children floating. On sections of the rivers closed to float outfitting, but open to the public, the crowding and conflicts have been reduced, the same friendly, welcoming atmosphere exists. I visit with many non residents on these sections of the rivers and they like it. I have fished on almost every Saturday, Residents day, on the Beaverhead River, since 1999, only missing it when the caddis or salmonfly hatch is on the Big Hole. I can attest that Resident's day is being used. Exceptions on the Beaverhead are this year when Clark Canyon blew out. Or, on the Big Hole when there is very high water. The Big Hole and Beaverhead River Plans are working well and are a model for other rivers with competing public and commercial use. These plans were brought about because of crowding, conflict and unregulated commercial use. The sections of the rivers

that are over crowded, are the sections open to outfitting. Stan Myers, FWP Commissioner, said if a section of river is crowded because of outfitter use, let the outfitters deal with it.

There is a move to do anything, just to get the rule making process open again, so the opponents of the river rules can dismantle as much of the rules as they can, i.e. The outfitters. There is a move to lift the outfitting restrictions on the Tash-Selway section of the Beaverhead. On the Beaverhead River, outfitters have the best section of the river, Dam-High Bridge, 7 days a week. And outfitters have the second best section, High Bridge- Henneberry, 6 days a week. The outfitters have Barretts-Tash which is ½ of the Barretts-Selway section 7days a week. The only section closed to float outfitting is Tash-Seway the other ½ of the Barretts-Selway section. And the outfitters have the remaining 39 miles of the river 7 days a week.

Now they want more. The outfitters want to open up Tash-Selway because the upper river is crowded on weekends. I know that if Tash-Seway is open to outfitters, they will sill have their first 3 boats on the upper river section and the crowding will not change there. The Tash-Selway section will than become crowded. The outfitters will have another section to send a boat.

The public has given enough. The outfitting business is still the largest users on the rivers. During the original rule making process, 1999 was the proposed cut off date for the moratorium on additional outfitters on the Beaverhead and Big Hole Rivers. There were 99 outfitters on the Beaverhead River. But, because 3 outfitters had high numbers of days in 2000 {they each outfitted for Five Rivers Lodge} the date was extended to 2000. Then in 2005, review of the rules, some guides expressed an interest in becoming small one boat outfitters. Additional outfitters and days were added for one boat outfitters. The rule changes that have been made were for the benefit of the outfitters. And these changes have added more use on the rivers, thus contributing to more crowding. No rule changes were made for the benefit of the public. Enough is enough. The line should be drawn and if there is an opportunity to reduce outfitter days, i.e. an outfitter going out of business, or not using his days, then those days should be eliminated. This would help to reduce crowding.

There is a low bridge on the Barrett-Tash section, I have suggested working with the landowner, FWP and anglers to raise the bridge. There is also a need for a put in at Point of Rocks. The land owner has closed this put in. These things may reduce some crowding.

The Big Hole and Beaverhead River Rules are working, reducing conflicts and crowding and providing a good recreation experience, please don't Change them. Don't fix it if it isn't broke.



Though unable to attend the public forums, I do want to weigh in on any proposed changes.

Having been one of the authors that proposed the current Big Hole plan, I have followed its implementation & success very closely. The social carrying capacity of the Big Hole was over the top in the late 1990s. Though river recreation has generally declined since that time, history shows that in the long run it is likely to continue upwards. Social conflict was extreme in the late 1990s, with near fist-fights at boat ramps, screamed obscenities between boats at hotly contested pools such as the 45-degree bend at Maiden Rock, and even the occasional incident of rock throwing. The Recreation Plan quieted all that down and has come to be well accepted by guides & outfitters, nonresidents, and residents. With only one reach closed to nonresident & commercial floaters each day, there are always plenty of alternative reaches available.

Tampering with the current plan would invite the kind of hostilities we saw a decade ago. Don't change a thing.

in addition to my earlier comments, please consider revising the rules to allow multiple kayak launches by private (non-outfitted, non-commercial) parties. This is a safety issue, as cited in the string below by avid kayaker and safety professional John Amtmann. The desire to revise the rules for kayaks has the strong support of the local kayaker community.

I've also sent this to Steve Luebeck at GGTU. Steve and I helped author the proposed rules that were subsequently adopted by MT FWP for the Big Hole River. According to my recollection and notes, the rules were intended to limit raft party launches to two boats, but we did not consider and did not intend to limit kayak launches.

Again, as you can see by the email string, the kayaking community believes that 5 to 10 boats is a reasonable and safe limit. I copied the kayakers that have been involved in the conversation to date.